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## BÉOWULF NOTES

- 303                   Eofor-líc scionon  
 304 ofer hléor-ber[gl]an gehroden golde,  
 305 fáh ond fýr-heard ferh-wearde héold,  
 306 gúð-mód grummon.

"The boar figures adorned with gold shone over the cheek-guards; bright and hardened in the fire they gave life protection; war-minded they raged."

The renderings of this passage suggested in the various editions of the *Béowulf* all assume the necessity of emendation in the last half-verse. The only suggestion for retaining the MS. reading, so far as I am aware, is Schücking's statement in the ninth and tenth Schücking-Heyne editions that Brandl "(brieflich) will *gúð-mód grummon* in Hinblick auf *grimman* 'roar' beibehalten." Schücking, however, gives no hint as to how Brandl would translate this half-verse or how he would fit it into the context. Chambers in the most recent English edition of the *Béowulf* (Cambridge, 1914) asserts that "the MS. reading, *gúpmód grummon*, hardly admits of interpretation." If, however, *eofor-líc* is construed as the subject of *grummon*, the MS. reading affords not merely a possible interpretation but a spirited and picturesque rendering. The poet of the *Béowulf* concentrated his attention upon the fierce appearance of the boar figures upon the helmets, and by a characteristically vigorous Old English figure represented them as savagely raging or roaring. The only syntactic difficulty in rendering this entire passage without resort to emendation is the singular *héold* interchanging with the plurals *scionon* and *grummon*. The singular verb form may be explained (Klaeber, *Mod. Phil.*, 3, 451) by construing its subject, *eofor-líc*, as a collective in this instance; or it may be merely another example in the *Béowulf* of a singular verb form with a plural subject (see Klaeber, *Mod. Phil.*, 3, 259). A possible motive for the change in verb form in this particular passage is a momentary change in the poet's point of view—from the savage appearance of the boar figures to the protecting service rendered by each.

- 532                           S6ð ic talige  
533 þæt ic mere-strengo máran áhte,  
534 earfeþo on ýþum, ðonne ænig óþer man.

The Chambers-Wyatt *Béowulf* (1914), though retaining the MS. reading, notes to verse 534 that “earfeþo, ‘stress,’ is not a good parallel to *mere-strengo*, so that many editors have altered to *eaſeþo*, ‘strength.’” As a matter of fact, most of the recent editions retain *earfeþo*, and at least as early as the seventh Socin-Heyne *Béowulf* (1903) this MS. reading was supported by a reference to *earmrān mānnōn* of verse 577. Further support of the MS. reading is found in verse 422, where apparently in speaking of the same exploit Béowulf declares that he “*nearo-bearfe dréah*”—“endured dire distress.”

- 867                           Hwilmum cyninges þegn,  
868 guma gilp-hlæden, gidda gemyndig,  
869 sé ðe eal-fela eald-gesegena  
870 worn gemunde, word óþer fand  
871 sóðe gebunden.

Klaeber’s suggestion (*Mod. Phil.*, 3, 455) that *gilphlæden* means “covered with glory,” “renowned,” has been accepted in most recent editions. A foot-note in Chambers-Wyatt proposes “‘laden with glorious words’ or perhaps simply ‘proud’ or ‘covered with glory.’” *Gilp-hlæden* seems to me merely intended as a variant of *gidda gemyndig* and a close parallel to it in meaning; the singer is not himself “covered with glory” but his memory is stored with glorious deeds, with famous lays of many a hero who, like Béowulf, had made good his *gilp-cwide*. Neither Chamber’s “laden with glorious words” nor Trautmann’s “sangerfüllter Mann” (*Bonner Beit.*, XVI, 51) is quite suitable, but either is less unsatisfactory than the usually accepted renderings.

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